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## PRESENTATION

OF THE

## G O L D M E D A L S,

AWARDED RESPECTIVELY TO MR. AUSTEN HENRY LAYARD AND  
BARON CHARLES VON HÜGEL.

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“GENTLEMEN,—You have already been informed by the Report of the Council that they have awarded the Founder’s Medal to Mr. Austen Henry Layard, for the valuable additions to Asiatic Geography which he has contributed in his several papers communicated to this Society, and for his persevering exertions in exploring the remains of the ancient cities of Mesopotamia, which have resulted in the discovery of the ruins of Nineveh, and the removal to this country of an invaluable collection of marbles illustrative of Assyrian art; it therefore becomes my duty to explain to you the grounds of this award. It is now ten years since Mr. Layard quitted this country with the view of visiting some of those classic localities in the East, which give so great a charm to the investigations of the Geographer and the Historian. After passing rapidly through the more trodden plains of Asia Minor and of Syria, his thoughts turned eastward, irresistibly attracted, as he says, by the mystery which overhangs the regions of Assyria, Babylonia, and Chaldæa—the birth-place of civilization, and almost, as it were, the cradle of the human race.

“In the spring of 1840 he proceeded from Aleppo to Mosul. Here he visited the ruins on the east bank of the Tigris, including the mounds of Kouyoumjik, hitherto generally looked upon as the remains of Nineveh. Journeying on one occasion with his companion to the ruins of Kalah Sherghat on the banks of the Tigris, about 70 miles below Mosul, they halted for the night at the Arab village of Hammum Ali, and were much struck by the appearance of a line of lofty mounds and ruins near the junction of the Zab and the Tigris, the foundation of which tradition attributed to Nimroud. But it was not until 1845, after a long residence at Constantinople, and in the countries of the Yezidis and the Kurds, and amidst various Arab tribes, that Mr. Layard was enabled, by the liberality of Sir Stratford Canning, to put in execution his long-cherished wishes of exploring what had so often attracted his attention and occupied his thoughts.

“How Mr. Layard proceeded in his arrangements for this work—how he conducted his negotiations with the rude inhabitants of the district, and the less rude, but more wily, Turkish authorities of Mosul—what tact he displayed in baffling the intrigues of enemies, and what

ingenuity he showed in overcoming the physical obstacles of nature, are fully detailed in his admirable work on the Remains of Nineveh.

“The interesting results of Mr. Layard’s exertions and discoveries, so far at least as they have reached this country, we have all seen in the British Museum; and although we may not venture for a moment to compare them as works of art with the classic productions of Phidias, the relics of the Parthenon, or the other monuments of Grecian art which adorn the national museums of Europe, it is impossible to look upon these monuments of a more ancient age without taking a deep interest in their discovery, and experiencing a strong feeling of curiosity as to the hands by which they were executed, the monarchs whose palaces they adorned, and the nation whose state of art and of civilization they so admirably illustrate. And our feelings of wonder and surprise rise to a still higher pitch, mingled however with somewhat akin to disappointment and regret, when our eyes wander along those endless lines of writing with which so many of these monuments are inscribed, to the deciphering of which no satisfactory clue has been discovered, and which no human intellect has yet succeeded in translating. What priceless relics of history, what valuable records of the past are here presented to our view, without our having the means of explaining a single word, or deciphering a single letter! But the merits of Mr. Layard’s work are not confined to the ruins of Nineveh. He availed himself of several opportunities, when circumstances compelled him to quit the scene of his antiquarian excavations, to visit the mountainous districts in the north, and to explore the secluded haunts of the Yezidi, the Kurd, and the Nestorian. The descriptions he has given us of these people are full of interest, particularly that of his visit to the Yezidi chief, during the celebration of their annual festivities; he also gives a slight sketch of their religious forms and worship, of which so little was hitherto known, although so much had been suspected and asserted.

“Mr. Layard has also greatly contributed to our knowledge of Asiatic Geography by the papers which he has on several occasions communicated to this Society. In the 12th volume of our Journal, p. 102, will be found a notice of ancient sites among the Bakhtiyari Mountains, extracted from a longer communication. In this notice, short as it is, are many useful corrections of the information respecting the Valley of Susan previously obtained by Major Rawlinson from oral sources. Another communication from Mr. Layard will be found in the 16th volume of our Journal, entitled ‘A Description of the Province of Khūzistān.’ This province nominally belongs to the Persian empire, and is situated near the head of the Persian Gulf, between the Euphrates and the Bakhtiyari Mountains. Mr. Layard’s paper yields in point of interest to none in our Journals, and is a valuable complement to Major Rawlinson’s memoir on Susiana, Luristan, and Kirmanshah, published in our 9th volume. Major Rawlinson may be said only to have reached Khuzistan, entering it from the north, while Mr. Layard, who visited it from Baghdad, has given us a general description of the whole province. We have here, first, a full account of its political condition, and its divisions under different tribes; secondly, a careful description of its physical geography, its

rivers, and their tributaries, all of which fall into the Euphrates between its junction with the Tigris and the Persian Gulf. The paper concludes with some remarks on the ancient geography of Susiana, in which many of the difficulties by which geographers have been perplexed in elucidating the route of Alexander through this country on his march to India are satisfactorily explained. It is on these grounds, and in the hope of stimulating Mr. Layard to still further exertion, that the Council have resolved on conferring on him the medal which I now hold in my hands as a proof of their high sense of his praiseworthy and meritorious undertaking."

The President, then addressing Mr. Austen, said—

"MR. AUSTEN,—In handing to you this medal which has been awarded to your nephew, Mr. Austen Henry Layard, by the Council of the Royal Geographical Society, I have to request that you will cause it to be conveyed to him in the name of the Royal Geographical Society, and that you will inform him that the Council are happy in having this opportunity of testifying their high approval of his exertions in the cause of geographical science, and of the zeal and ability with which he has carried out his undertakings, by which his name has become connected with one of the most interesting discoveries of modern times. I trust that you will also assure him that our regret at his not being present to receive it himself is mitigated by the knowledge that he is about to return again to the scene of his former discoveries, to add fresh laurels to those he has already won. I request you at the same time to assure him of the warm interest which the Royal Geographical Society will ever feel in his future welfare and prosperity."

Mr. Austen, in reply, stated :—

"I feel, Sir, quite incompetent to reply to your very kind and flattering address, and regret exceedingly that my nephew, Mr. Layard, being absent from England, is unable to receive in person the Gold Medal which the Society have done him the honour to award him. It will give me the greatest pleasure to forward to him so gratifying a mark of their esteem for his services. May I hope, Sir, that you will favour me with a copy of your address, that I may forward it to my nephew, who will, I know, most fully appreciate the kind sentiments you have expressed. Having watched him from his cradle, I feel very naturally the greatest pride and satisfaction in the success of his labours, and in the honorary distinctions which reward them. It gives me pleasure, therefore, to be his sponsor on this very gratifying occasion. I know he has always felt deep interest in this Society; and before he left England (now ten years ago), having thrown off the trammels of the law, which was his destined profession, I saw him poring over maps and plans, with his mind evidently bent on exploring the far East.

"You have alluded, Sir, to the result of some of his wanderings, which were communicated to this Society through Lord Aberdeen, and which have appeared in the Transactions of the Society. When

he left England, he had no letters of introduction, and no patronage or assistance of any sort ; but, though so young, his character was formed. Firm and energetic, with courage which nothing could daunt, he combined an indomitable and enterprising spirit with the most amiable disposition. His work, lately published, and to which you have so kindly alluded, shows how much he effected and the power he possessed to deal with the greater difficulties of his enterprise. Until that work was published, none of his friends were aware of the amount of those difficulties, for he scarcely alluded to them ; although his health, I regret to say, has much suffered from his exertions.

"It is not improbable that my communication will be first made to him in England : as he may have left Constantinople, on his way home, before my letter reaches him, to prepare for a more extended field of operations, which will, I trust, show him still deserving of the distinguished honour now paid to him.

"It only remains for me, Sir, again to thank you, and to assure you that I shall with great pleasure communicate to him the very gratifying proceedings of this day."

#### PATRON'S MEDAL.

The President, then proceeding, observed—

"You have also been informed that the Patron's Medal has been awarded by the Council to the distinguished Austrian traveller Baron Charles von Hügel, for his enterprising and successful exploration of Cashmere, the Punjab, and the surrounding countries, as communicated to the public in his work entitled '*Kashmir und das Reich der Siek*;' and also for the zeal and ability with which he formed those collections of plants and animals in Australia, as well as in Upper India, which have enriched European museums, and particularly those of Vienna.

"The fame of Baron Hügel's travels has been so long before the world, and the character they have acquired for faithful representation and graphic delineation is so well known, that it is unnecessary for me to enter upon that subject. I therefore propose to take a rapid glance of Baron Hügel's route, to mention the principal places which he visited, and to describe the line of country over which he passed in his novel and interesting expedition. I will only mention, as a proof of his accuracy, that it has been stated that during the late military operations against the Sikhs, our officers derived the greatest advantage from the correctness with which he had described the country he visited, and the care with which it was laid down in the map constructed by Mr. Arrowsmith chiefly from his materials. When we recollect the difficulties of travelling in Eastern countries, and particularly in the then less known portions of Runjeet Singh's dominions, unassisted by a single companion, as was the case with Baron Hügel, we can well appreciate the energy with which he carried out his plans, and the perseverance which enabled him so faithfully to record what he had seen.

"But to return to our narrative. After many months of prepara-

tion and delay, Baron Hügel started from Simla on the 13th of October, 1835, and crossed the Sutlej into the Maha Rajah's territory at Belaspoor. The lateness of the season prevented his taking the less frequented route by the Berenda Pass, and thus reaching Cashmere by way of Ladak. Equally unwilling to cross the plains of the Punjab, Baron Hügel determined to take the direction of the lowest range of the Himalaya: thus avoiding the difficulties of the mountain-passes and the monotony of the plains.

"From Belaspoor he proceeded to Narpoor, thence to Cashmere by the more practicable route of Jammú, thus skirting the Punjab, instead of attempting the then impassable route by Kishtiwär. Here the vegetation is described as truly luxurious; watered as the country is by the numerous streams rising at the foot of the Himalayas, or within the parallel ranges by which it is skirted. After quitting Jammú, he entered a mountainous district, and, proceeding in a more northerly direction, entered the happy valley of Cashmere by the Pass of Pir Punjal. He was unfortunate in the season; the cold of winter disabled his Indian followers and added to his difficulties.

"At Sirinaghur, the capital of Cashmere, he fell in with our countryman Mr. Godfrey Vigne, with whom he subsequently travelled to Attock, and through the Punjab to Lahore. One of the great peculiarities of Cashmere is the absence of storms and wind; probably owing to the sequestered position of the valley, surrounded by ranges of lofty mountains. From Sirinaghur, Baron Hügel and Mr. Vigne visited the eastern portion of the valley as far as Islamabad, near which was one of the summer palaces of the Emperors of Delhi, situated on the banks of the Jylum. This river is navigable throughout almost the whole length of the valley of Cashmere. After a short delay, Baron Hügel quitted the capital in company with Mr. Vigne and Dr. Henderson, and proceeded to visit the Wallar Lake, near the north-west extremity of the valley, whence they ascended the mountain-barrier 7000 feet above Cashmere. Beyond this lake the current of the Jylum increases, and on reaching the Baramulla Pass, by which our travellers proposed descending to Attock, it becomes a rapid stream. This pass is the boundary of Cashmere; a rapid descent leads, amidst scenery of the wildest description, following the windings of the river, to Muzafferabad, 3000 feet below Cashmere. A fatiguing and dangerous journey over a wild country brought them from thence to Attock. On many occasions the zeal with which Baron Hügel pursued his investigations in botany and natural history exposed him to much danger from the prejudices of the natives, aroused by his killing birds which were held sacred by them. At Attock Baron Hügel again found himself in the plain of India, and at length reached the limit of his journey; being, as he says, the first European who had hitherto wandered through this vast empire from its most southern point at Cape Cormorin, to its northern boundary at Attock.

"From Attock he proceeded by the imperial route to Lahore, through a country now well known, but the details of which are graphically described in the work before us, which deserves the careful perusal of those who wish to have a vivid picture of Indian life, and of the varied impressions excited in the minds of those who visit India from

the distant West. The description of the route from Attock to Lahore is peculiarly interesting at the present moment, associated as it is with the proceedings of the late campaign against the Sikhs.

"At Lahore Baron Hügel remained some time enjoying the hospitality of Runjeet Singh, of whom and his government he gives us a lively and interesting account. His description of Runjeet's troops, of his officers, and especially of his powerful artillery—powerful even in that day (1836), is particularly worthy of remark. The work concludes with some brief political and geographical remarks on the kingdom founded by Runjeet Singh, and on the Punjab.

"But I must here conclude, and omit alluding to any other portion of Baron Hügel's adventurous travels, through China, Singapore, and Australia. His work on Cashmere and the Punjab is alone sufficient to place him in the foremost rank of the distinguished travellers of the age."

The President, then addressing Sir Roderick Murchison, said:—

"SIR RODERICK MURCHISON,—In handing to you this medal for your friend Baron Hügel, you will allow me to observe that we had hoped from your own statement that the Austrian Minister, Count Colloredo, would have been able to be present on this occasion to receive the medal for his distinguished countryman: the Royal Geographical Society would have witnessed with pleasure the presence of one whose name is so well known to science as that of Count Colloredo.

"In his absence, however, I must request you, as the personal friend of Baron Hügel, to forward to him this medal, and in doing so, to assure him of the warm interest felt by this Society in his prosperity and happiness, and of their hope that the speedy restoration of peace and quiet to his country will enable him to resume those occupations, in which he has hitherto been engaged with so much satisfaction to himself, and so much advantage to his country."

To which Sir Roderick Murchison replied—

"Whilst I regret that public duties have prevented his Excellency the Austrian Minister, Count Colloredo (himself a worthy cultivator of physical science), from being present to receive this medal, I have the sincerest pleasure, Sir, in being made the organ of communication between yourself and my distinguished friend Baron C. Hügel, who will, I am certain, deeply value this token of the esteem and consideration of the Royal Geographical Society of London. We have, Sir, in truth, done honour to ourselves in thus recompensing an enlightened and enterprising foreign nobleman, who has so freely devoted years of toil, and a competent fortune, to the advancement of our science; and I trust that this manifestation of our opinion of his merits may so strengthen the just claims which he has upon the gratitude of his country, that when Austria shall have regained internal tranquillity, we may see our medallist occupying the high post of Director of the Imperial museums and gardens of Vienna, which he has so much enriched—a post which I have authority to state it was intended he should occupy, if the recent revolution had not intervened to check (for a time only, let us hope) all administrative scientific arrangements."